




Aging Out



standuponit

 **standuponit**

<https://standuponit.livejournal.com/2010-04-07> 08:29:00

MOOD: ??? nostalgic

I emancipated before I aged out

([https://www.livejournal.com/away?](https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A//www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php%3FstoryId%3D125594259)

[to=http%3A//www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php%3FstoryId%3D125594259](https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php%3FstoryId%3D125594259)).

, but... I could.

Not everybody can.

Compassion: it's what's for breakfast.



This looks like a
good idea.

...

This.

...

Little guy's not
bad.

Gotta teach RHex
to smear.

20 comments



 **tylik**

[April 7 2010, 13:42:24 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Especially considering that overall the trend seems to be towards folks taking longer before they're really independent. It's really odd, sometimes, to be working with the undergraduates here. I mean, very cool - but they're both so much less independent, and so very well supported... (well, for a bright, high strung group, overall.)

(I was out on my own* when I was fifteen - but I was also lucky enough to acquire a pretty excellent community of people around me. And even then, my situation was more than a little unusual.)

* From my birth family.



 **standuponit**

[April 7 2010, 14:36:44 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I was lucky enough to ace my placement exams and qualify for God's own scholarship package. But that was luck of the draw--not everybody gets issued the academic talent I did. And I knew a lot of people who didn't make it out of the system, or didn't survive long once they did.

Here's to being lucky.



 [tylik](#)

[April 7 2010, 17:15:48 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

raises glass

That is kind of similar to part of mine... but that part gets complicated. (Started at the university when I was thirteen. Left, came back, ended up not being able to pay tuition when I became rather abruptly on my own... but then, I had been offered full rides at schools that probably would have been far better places to be an undergraduate, and I wasn't willing to pursue that because of aforementioned community. And if everything were completely different, then everything would be completely different.

...though the legal questions would have been non-trivial, even after I turned sixteen. WA doesn't have emancipated minor status, though I was recognized as "half-emancipated" by the courts after I sued my dad the first time. That got me some support for school. And I worked a lot.)

I adore my undergrads, and finding bright and unsatisfied kids and bringing them into the lab is one of my favorite hobbies. (Aside from my two surgical assistants, who are awesome, there are these two in the CNS class - mathy linux-using python-hacking system biology geeklings, both... adorable! - that I'm currently cultivating.) But it's like we're just from different worlds. In a lot of ways, they have both access to and know about a lot of resources I was pretty clueless about / couldn't use anyway, and have navigational help that just kind of floors me. In other ways they seem so sheltered. And sometimes I'll make some trivial joke about something that I did when I was their ages, and rather than laughing it's all the wide eyed horror.



 [sprrwhwk](#)

[April 8 2010, 03:02:41 UTC](#)


[COLLAPSE](#)

Here's to being lucky.

Salud.

And here's to scholarships and financial aid packages too. The financial aid people at my school are getting a big bouquet when I finally get out. (And then steady donations once I have an income again and have built my savings back to a healthy point.)



 [jennygadget](#)

[April 8 2010, 18:41:48 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

thanks for the reminder.

my friends and I used to talk about paying back all the grant money we were given once we got out,

and it's taken so long for me to get anywhere near solvent that it has yet to become a habit.

reminds self to make it a habit




 [themaskmaker](#)

[April 7 2010, 14:04:41 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Yeah.



 [standuponit](#)

[April 7 2010, 14:37:05 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

pea shoots!



 [themaskmaker](#)

[April 7 2010, 16:43:06 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

D00d, they are soooooooo delectable.... I'm already starting my next crop.

 [tylik](#)

[April 7 2010, 17:16:52 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Oh, really craving pea vine black mushroom dumplings now...

 [dichroic](#)

[April 7 2010, 14:23:31 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I've been fairly independent since 17 - but "fairly" includes my parents paying about 1/6 of my college costs (because that was what they could afford, not because they wouldn't pay more) and the knowledge that I had a safety net I *could* use if I had to.

My dad on the other hand is a fucking miracle; survived the foster system, along with knowing he was dumped into it because his parents didn't care, not because they were dead. Still married to my mom, going on 47 years, helped raise two kids without passing on any of the abuse he suffered. He's got all kinds of physical and mental health issues, and no wonder, but it's amazing he's not in a lot worse shape. (Or dead - and Mom gets a lot of the credit that he's not.)



 [standuponit](#)

[April 7 2010, 14:37:33 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Here's to miracles, too.

 [jennythe_reader](#)


[April 7 2010, 14:47:36 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I caught the tail end of this story on my way into work this morning, and thought of you.

It also made me wonder what the situation is like here in NY, and if there's anything I can do to help.




 [b1b10v0re](#)

[April 7 2010, 15:04:05 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

If you would like to help, you may want to contact your local regional office at [OCFS](#) and see if there is anything that you can do.

I used to work for an [OCFS contract agency](#) on Long Island and we were always in need to volunteers to help/spend time with the foster kids.


 [magpie49](#)

[April 7 2010, 15:57:18 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I'm glad you were able to emancipate.

sigh about the article That's like throwing someone into the ocean during a storm to teach them to swim. Eep!

My mom's best friend was a foster mom, but she got the babies who weren't expected to live. It was very sad.

 [jennygadget](#)

[April 8 2010, 02:01:44 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)


(not that this has to do with aging out in particular...)

As part of a pilot program sponsored by the CA state libraries, my branch is supposed to be one of several to pick out a specific underserved demographic and do outreach directed at that group as part of our summer reading program.

Every time you post something about the foster system I feel more and more sure of our choice to outreach to children in group homes/foster care.

(and then I think, god, how *little* is that going to help?)



 [standuponit](#)

[April 8 2010, 02:32:32 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Do you know about the parable of the starfish?

<http://www.racematters.org/theparableofthestarfish.htm>

You never know which gesture might save a life.

 [bibliophage79](#)

[April 8 2010, 05:59:06 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

In the case of foster care kids in LA county, you could literally save a life. There's been something like a dozen kids actually killed by their caretakers in the past 12 months, mostly very young children. Any extra pair of eyes on those kids would be worthwhile.



jennygadget

April 8 2010, 18:57:31 UTC

COLLAPSE

I think I had - and when I read it before I was all like...starfish, really?

This time it reminded me of the day my cousin K (who is awesome, btw) was tagging along on my paper route (I was maybe 13, she was maybe 9) and we had finished our cans of coke and I went to go look for a trash can to put them in (this was long before recycling was the norm, mind) and she was all "wait! we have to recycle them!" and I was all "um, we have to carry them back to the house then. are you sure? it's just two cans. it's not like tons more don't already get tossed every day." and she replied with something like "all the more reason to do what little we can." To which the only decent reply is "that's a damn good point."

;)

Anyway, having already been schooled by K, I certainly wasn't thinking of NOT doing it because it might help only a little.

It's more that knowing so much more is needed can be sometimes overwhelming. But it's good to remember that more is needed, because that is why we give ourselves goals like measuring the summer reading outcomes* and doing outreach to under-served communities instead of just looking at our summer reading output* and figuring that's all we need to do.

And speaking of never knowing which gesture might save a life...a big part of why I immediately thought of kids in group homes/foster care is because you are on my flist and you make posts like this every so often. So kudos to you.

*in our case, these mean surveys and focus groups vs. just counting heads...and books



ace_cub_reportr

April 9 2010, 12:36:09 UTC

COLLAPSE

There's a long interview with some of the same folks here:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=125729965>



standuponit

April 10 2010, 16:03:36 UTC

Edited: April 10 2010, 16:23:49 UTC

COLLAPSE

Whew. What she says about the student loans?

Ain't it the truth. I wonder if I can carry a halftime load until I die, and never have to pay them back.

Oh, and the thing about foster kids growing up to be counselors? I know at least one who did that.

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